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In re Application of

Yasuhiko KENMOCHI *et al.*

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/753,531

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For: PULL-ON DISPOSABLE WEARING ARTICLE

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LETTER SUBMITTING ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PRIORITY DOCUMENT

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Sir:

Submitted herewith is a sworn English translation of corresponding *Japanese Application No. 2003-038977, filed January 10, 2003*, to perfect the previously filed claim to priority.

Entry is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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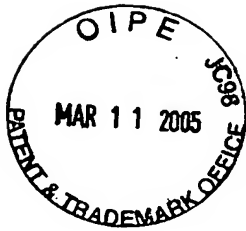


DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare and state that I am well versed both in English and Japanese languages and that the annexed English translation corresponds in its contents exactly to the Japanese language specification and claims filed in the Japanese Patent Office on the 10th day of January, 2003 under the Patent Application No. 2003-38977.

This 28th day of February, 2005.

Signed by _____
Yoshiharu Shirahama
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(TRANSLATION)

PATENT OFFICE
JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

This is to certify that the annexed is a true copy of the following application as filed with this Office.

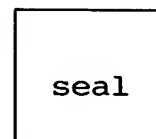
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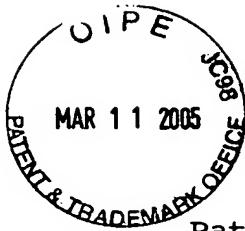
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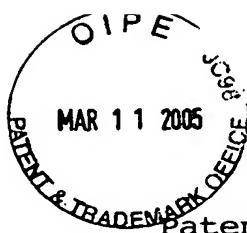
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- 1 -

[Name of Document]

SPECIFICATION

[Title of the Invention]

PANTS-TYPE DISPOSABLE WEARING

ARTICLE

[Claims]

[Claim 1] A pants-type disposable wearing article having front and rear waist regions opposed to each other and a crotch region extending between these waist regions and generally contoured by a waist-surrounding upper end margin defined by said front and rear waist regions and extending in a transverse direction, transversely opposite waist's lateral margins defined by said front and rear waist regions and extending in a longitudinal direction so that respective said waist's lateral margins of said front and rear waist regions may be connected to for a waist-hole and a pair of leg-holes, first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins defined by said crotch region and extending in a leg-surrounding direction, and a liquid-absorbent core laid in said front waist region, said rear waist region and said crotch region, or at least in said crotch region, said pants-type disposable wearing article being characterized by that:

said crotch region is formed with a pair of first folding guide lines extending from two points on said first leg-surrounding lateral margin placed aside toward said front

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and rear waist regions, respectively, toward a transverse middle of said crotch region and a pair of second folding guide lines extending from two points on said second leg-surrounding lateral margin placed aside toward said front and rear waist regions, respectively, toward said transverse middle of said crotch region so that said crotch region may be divided into a first zone enclosed by said first leg-surrounding lateral margin and said first folding guide lines so as to taper toward said transverse middle of said crotch region, a second zone enclosed by said second leg-surrounding lateral margin and said second folding guide lines so as to taper toward said transverse middle of said crotch region and a third zone except said first and second zones;

a first elastic member extending in the leg-surrounding direction across said first zone to said third zone is contractibly attached to the article immediately inside the side edge of said core on the side of said first leg-surrounding lateral margin and a second elastic member extending in the leg-surrounding direction across said second zone to said third zone is contractibly attached to the article immediately inside the side edge of said core on the side of said second leg-surrounding lateral margin; and

said first zone is pulled inward as viewed in the

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leg-surrounding direction under a contractile force of said first elastic member to form a tuck which is convex inwardly of said leg-hole and said second zone is pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under a contractile force of said second elastic member to form a tuck which is convex inwardly of said leg-hole.

[Claim 2] The wearing article according to Claim 1, wherein said first and second elastic members exhibit a contraction percentage in a range of 25 to 70% on the basis of 100 representing a length of said first and second elastic members having been stretched at a predetermined ratio.

[Claim 3] The wearing article according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein said first and second elastic members exhibit a stretch stress in a range of 0.1 to 3.0 N.

[Claim 4] The wearing article according to any one of Claims 1 through 3, wherein said core has stiffness lower in said first and second zones than in said third zone.

[Claim 5] The wearing article according to any one of Claims 1 through 3, wherein said core is absent in said first and second zones.

[Claim 6] The wearing article according to any one of Claims 1 through 5, wherein said article comprises a liquid-pervious sheet facing the article wearer's skin, a

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liquid-impervious sheet facing away from the article wearer's skin and said core interposed between these sheets.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Technical Field of the Invention]

The present invention relates to a pants-type disposable wearing article adapted to absorb and to retain bodily discharges.

[0002]

[Related Art]

The pants-type disposable wearing article having front and rear waist regions opposed to each other, a crotch region extending between these waist regions, a waist-hole and a pair of leg-holes is well known, which comprises a liquid-pervious sheet, a liquid-impervious sheet and a liquid-absorbent core interposed between these sheets and extending over the crotch region and further into the front and rear waist regions wherein the crotch region is formed with tucks which are convex inwardly of the respective leg-holes (See PATENT DOCUMENT 1).

[0003]

The article disclosed in the above-cited Gazette has a waist-surrounding upper end margin defined by the front and rear waist regions and extending in a transverse direction, waists'

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lateral margins defined also by the front and rear waist regions and extending in a longitudinal direction and a pair of leg-surrounding lateral margins defined by the crotch region and extending in a leg-surrounding direction wherein the waists' lateral margins put flat together are bonded one to another by means of plural welding lines arranged intermittently in the longitudinal direction. This article is formed with a pair of folding guide lines extending between the transversely opposite leg-surrounding lateral margins and intersecting at a transversely middle point in the crotch region. Thus the crotch region is divided into first and second zones enclosed by the leg-surrounding lateral margins and these folding guide lines, respectively, and a third zone except the first and second zones. The first and second zones are folded along the respective folding guide lines between front and rear halves of the third zone so as to form a pair of tucks which are convex inwardly of the respective leg-holes. Compared to the state before the first and second zones are folded inward, the transverse dimension of the crotch region can be effectively reduced by folding these zones between the front and rear halves of the third zone.

[0004]

[PATENT DOCUMENT 1]

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Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application Gazette No.

2002-35033

[0005]

[Problem to be Solved by the Invention]

However, the article disclosed in the above-cited PATENT DOCUMENT 1 has been accompanied with the problem such that the tucks are unfolded along the folding guide lines as the article wearer's legs are guided through the leg-holes of the article and the transverse dimension of the crotch region returns to the dimension before these tucks have been formed. In a consequence, the transverse dimension sometimes becomes larger than the wearer's crotch region and can not be appropriately received in the wearer's crotch region. The core becomes more bulky than supposed from its predetermined thickness and stiffness and gives the wearer a feeling of incompatibility. In addition, the core laid in the crotch region is irregularly folded or the core is formed with a plurality of irregular wrinkles and deteriorates bodily discharge absorbing function excepted for the crotch region, causing any quantity of bodily discharges to leak sideways from the crotch region.

[0006]

In view of the problem as has been described above, it is a principal object of the present invention to provide a

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pants-type disposable wearing article allowing a crotch region to be formed with tucks stabilized against being unintentionally unfolded, which serve, in turn, to reduce a transverse dimension of the crotch region so that the crotch region may be compactly received in a crotch region of the article wearer.

[0007]

[Measure to Solve the Problem]

The object set forth above is achieved, according to the present invention, by an improvement in the pants-type disposable wearing article having front and rear waist regions opposed to each other and a crotch region extending between these waist regions and generally contoured by a waist-surrounding upper end margin defined by the front and rear waist regions and extending in a transverse direction, transversely opposite waist's lateral margins defined by the front and rear waist regions and extending in a longitudinal direction so that respective the waist's lateral margins of the front and rear waist regions may be connected to for a waist-hole and a pair of leg-holes, first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins defined by the crotch region and extending in a leg-surrounding direction, and a liquid-absorbent core laid in the front waist region, the rear waist region and the crotch

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region, or at least in the crotch region.

[0008]

The improvement according to the present invention is characterized by that the crotch region is formed with a pair of first folding guide lines extending from two points on the first leg-surrounding lateral margin placed aside toward the front and rear waist regions, respectively, toward a transverse middle of the crotch region and a pair of second folding guide lines extending from two points on the second leg-surrounding lateral margin placed aside toward the front and rear waist regions, respectively, toward the transverse middle of the crotch region so that the crotch region may be divided into a first zone enclosed by the first leg-surrounding lateral margin and the first folding guide lines so as to taper toward the transverse middle of the crotch region, a second zone enclosed by the second leg-surrounding lateral margin and the second folding guide lines so as to taper toward the transverse middle of the crotch region and a third zone except the first and second zones; a first elastic member extending in the leg-surrounding direction across the first zone to the third zone is contractibly attached to the article immediately inside the side edge of the core on the side of the first leg-surrounding lateral margin and a second elastic member extending in the

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leg-surrounding direction across the second zone to the third zone is contractibly attached to the article immediately inside the side edge of the core on the side of the second leg-surrounding lateral margin; and the first zone is pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under a contractile force of the first elastic member to form a tuck which is convex inwardly of the leg-hole and the second zone is pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under a contractile force of the second elastic member to form a tuck which is convex inwardly of the leg-hole.

[0009]

According to one preferred embodiment of the invention, the first and second elastic members exhibit a contraction percentage in a range of 25 to 70 % on the basis of 100 representing a length of the first and second elastic members having been stretched at a predetermined ratio.

[0010]

According to another preferred embodiment of the invention, the first and second elastic members exhibit a stretch stress in a range of 0.1 to 3.0 N.

[0011]

According to still another preferred embodiment of the invention, the core has stiffness lower in the first and second

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zones than in the third zone.

[0012]

According to further another preferred embodiment of the invention, the core is absent in the first and second zones.

[0013]

According to an alternatively preferred embodiment of the invention, the article comprises a liquid-pervious sheet facing the article wearer's skin, a liquid-impervious sheet facing away from the article wearer's skin and the core interposed between these sheets.

[0014]

[Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments]

Details of the pants type disposable wearing article according to the present invention will be more fully understood from the description given hereunder in reference with the accompanying drawings.

[0015]

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing a wearing article 1A according to an embodiment of the invention, Fig. 2 is a perspective view showing the article 1A of Fig. 1 as tucks 26, 27 unfolded outward against contractile force of elastic members 24, 25, Fig. 3 is a developed plan view showing the article 1A of Fig. 1 with waist's lateral margins 10

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disconnected from each other as partially broken away, and Fig. 4 is a sectional view taken along a line IV-IV in Fig. 1. In Figs. 1 through 3, a transverse direction is indicated by an arrow L, a longitudinal direction is indicated by an arrow M and a leg-surrounding direction is indicated by an arrow N (only in Figs. 1 and 2). Fig. 3 shows the article 1A as stretched in the transverse direction as well as in the longitudinal direction. Expression used herein "inner surfaces" of a topsheet 2, an intermediate sheet 3 and an outer sheet 5 refers to the surfaces of these sheets facing a core 4 and expression used herein "outer surfaces" of these sheets 2, 3, 5 refers to the surfaces thereof facing away from the core 4.

[0016]

The article 1A comprises the liquid-pervious topsheet 2 (liquid-pervious sheet), the intermediate sheet 3, the liquid-absorbent core 4 interposed between these sheets 2, 3, the liquid-impervious outer sheet 5 (liquid-impervious sheet) laid outside the intermediate sheet 3, and respective elastic members 16, 17, 18, 24, 25. In the article 1A, the topsheet 2 faces the wearer's skin with interposition of the core 4 and the intermediate sheet 3 as well as the outer sheet 5 face away from the wearer's skin. The article 1A has a front waist region 6 and a rear waist region 8 opposed to each other and a crotch

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region 7 extending between these waist regions 6, 8. The core 4 extends over the crotch region 7 and further into the front and rear waist regions 6, 8 so as to occupy transverse middle areas in these front and rear waist regions 6, 8.

[0017]

The article 1A has a waist-surrounding upper margin 9 defined by respective portions of the front and rear waist regions 6, 8 extending outside longitudinally opposite ends 4a of the core 4 in the transverse direction, transversely opposite waist's lateral margins 10 defined by respective portions of the front and rear waist regions 6, 8 extending outside transversely opposite side edges 4b of the core in the longitudinal direction, and first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12 defined by respective portions of the crotch region 7 extending outside the transversely opposite side edges 4b of the core 4 in the leg-surrounding direction. The first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12 describe circular arcs which are convex inward as viewed in the transverse direction of the article 1A. Thus the article 1A presents a substantially hourglass-like planar shape.

[0018]

In the article 1A, the waist's lateral margins 10 are put flat and bonded together by means of plural welding lines 13

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arranged intermittently in the longitudinal direction. The article 1A is formed with a waist-hole 14 surrounded by the waist-surrounding upper margin 9 and a pair of leg-holes 15 surrounded by the first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12, respectively.

[0019]

A belt-like waist elastic member 16 extending in the transverse direction is contractibly attached to the waist-surrounding upper margin 9. Plural leg elastic members 17, 18 are contractibly attached to the first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12, respectively, so as to extend in the leg-surrounding direction.

[0020]

As shown by Figs. 2 and 3, the crotch region 7 is formed with a pair of first folding guide lines 19 extending in the transverse direction from two points P1, P2 on the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11 placed aside toward the front and rear waist regions 6, 8, respectively, toward a transverse middle 7a of the crotch region 7 and a pair of second folding guide lines 20 extending in the transverse direction from two points P3, P4 on the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12 placed aside toward the front and rear waist regions 6, 8, respectively, toward the transverse middle 7a of the crotch

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region 7. The first folding guide lines 19 describe a substantially V-shape broadening from the middle 7a of the crotch region 7 toward the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11 and the second folding guide lines 20 describe a substantially V-shape broadening from the middle 7a of the crotch region 7 toward the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12.

[0021]

The crotch region 7 is divided into a first zone 21 enclosed by the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11 and the first folding guide lines 19, a second zone 22 enclosed by the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12 and the second folding guide lines 20 and a third zone 23 except the first and second zones 21, 22. The first zone 21 presents a substantially triangular shape tapering from the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11 toward the middle 7a of the crotch region 7. Similarly, the second zone 22 presents a substantially triangular shape tapering from the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12 toward the middle 7a of the crotch region 7. Stiffness of the core 4 is lower in the first and second zones 21, 22 than in the third zone 23.

[0022]

Immediately inside the side edge 4b of the core 4 on the

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side of the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11, a first elastic member 24 stretched at a predetermined ratio is contractibly attached to the article. The first elastic member 24 is laid inside the leg elastic members 17, 18 as viewed in the transverse direction and extends in the leg-surrounding direction across the first zone 21 to the third zone 23. In the similar manner, immediately inside the side edge 4b of the core 4 on the side of the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12, a second elastic member 25 stretched at a predetermined ratio is contractibly attached to the article. The second elastic member 25 is laid inside the leg elastic members 17, 18 as viewed in the transverse direction and extends in the leg-surrounding direction across the second zone 22 to the third zone 23. The first and second elastic members 24, 25 are interposed between the topsheet 2 and the core 4 and bonded thereto.

[0023]

In the crotch region 7, the first zone 21 is pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under the contractile force of the first elastic member 24 and the second zone 22 is pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under the contractile force of the second elastic member 25 so that the crotch region 7 is folded along the first

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and second folding guide lines 19, 20. In the crotch region 7, consequently, the first zone 21 forms a tuck 26 which is convex inwardly of the leg-hole 15 and the second zone 22 forms a tuck 27 which is convex inwardly of the leg-hole 15. The first zone 21 and the second zone 22 are tucked between front and rear halves of the third zone 23. In the first zone 21, a front half 21a and a rear half 21b thereof contact each other while portions of the outer sheet 5 extending in these front and rear halves 21a, 21b of the first zone 21 have respective outer surfaces contacting each other. In the second zone 22 a front half 22a and a rear half 22b thereof contact each other while portions of the outer sheet 5 extending in these front and rear halves 22a, 22b of the second zone 22 have respective outer surfaces contacting each other. In the first and second zones 21, 22, imaginary third folding guide lines 28 extending in the transverse direction are defined between the front and rear halves 21a, 21b and between the front and rear halves 22a, 22b, respectively. An alternative case may be also assumed in which the zones 21, 22 are pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under the contractile force of the first and second elastic members 24, 25 and thereby these zones 21, 22 are tucked inwardly of the respective leg-holes 15 without forming the third folding guide lines 28 in these first

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and second zones 21, 22.

[0024]

The first and second elastic members 24, 25 exhibit a contraction percentage in a range of 25 to 70 % on the basis of 100 representing the length of these elastic members 24, 25 having been stretched at a predetermined ratio, and exhibit a stretch stress in a range of 0.1 to 3.0 N. The contraction percentage is calculated from formula:

$$\{(A - B)/A\} \times 100$$

where A represents length of the elastic members 24, 25 stretched at a predetermined ratio and B represents length of these elastic members 24, 25 after contracted.

[0025]

If the contraction percentage of the elastic members 24, 25 is less than 25%, the elastic members 24, 25 after contracted from stretched state sometimes can not sufficiently pull the first and second zones 21, 22 inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction to form the tucks 26, 27 in the crotch region 7. If the stretch stress of the elastic members 24, 25 is less than 0.1 N, the contractile force of the elastic members 24, 25 will sometimes be insufficient to maintain the tucks 26, 27, so the tucks 26, 27 may be easily unfolded along the first and second folding guide lines 19, 20 as the article 1A is put

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on the wearer's body. In consequence, the crotch region 7 may return to its initial state prior to formation of the tucks 26, 27.

[0026]

Both the topsheet 2 and the intermediate sheet 3 present substantially rectangular planar shapes extending over the front waist region 6, the crotch region 7 and the rear waist region 8. These sheets 2, 3 respectively have longitudinally opposite end margins 2a, 3a extending outward beyond the longitudinally opposite ends 4a of the core 4 and transversely opposite lateral margins 2b, 3b extending outward beyond the transversely opposite side edges 4b of the core 4. Inner surfaces of these sheets 2, 3 are put flat and bonded together along these end margins 2a, 3a and these lateral margins 2b, 3b. In the front and rear waist regions 6, 8, the lateral margins 2b, 3b of these sheets 2, 3 are folded inward as viewed in the transverse direction onto the upper surface of the core 4 and the lateral margins 2b of the sheet 2 are bonded to the end margins 2a thereof. The intermediate sheet 3 has its outer surface bonded to the inner surface of the outer sheet 5. The core 4 is bonded to the respective inner surfaces of the topsheet 2 and the intermediate sheet 3.

[0027]

The outer sheet 5 comprises two hydrophobic fibrous

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nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30 laminated one upon another. The outer sheet 5 has a surface area larger than those of the topsheet 2 and the intermediate sheet 3 and presents a substantially hourglass-like planar shape. The waist-surrounding upper end margin 9 and the waist's lateral margins 10 are formed by the outer sheet 5 and the leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12 are formed by the lateral margins 2b, 3b of the sheets 2, 3 and the outer sheet 5.

[0028]

The waist elastic member 16 is interposed between the nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30 constituting the outer sheet 5 and bonded to these nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30. The leg elastic members 17, 18 comprise the elastic member 17 attached to the outer sheet 5 and the elastic member 18 attached to the topsheet 2 and the intermediate sheet 3. The elastic member 17 is interposed between the nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30 and bonded to these nonwoven fabric layers 23, 30. The elastic member 18 is interposed between the topsheet 2 and the intermediate sheet 3 and bonded to respective inner surfaces of the lateral margins 2b, 3b thereof. These elastic members 17, 18 extend along the leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12 so as to form substantially annular shapes.

[0029]

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The core 4 comprises a mixture of fluff pulp and super-absorbent polymer particles or a mixture of fluff pulp, super-absorbent polymer particles and thermoplastic synthetic resin fiber, in any case, compressed to a desired thickness. Therefore, stiffness of the core 4 is higher than those of the topsheet, the intermediate sheet 3 and the outer sheet 5. Preferably, the core 4 is entirely wrapped with a liquid-pervious sheet such as tissue paper or hydrophilic fibrous nonwoven fabric in order to prevent the core 4 from getting out of its initial shape and/or in order to prevent polymer particles from falling off.

[0030]

To adjust stiffness of the core 4 to be lower in the first and second zones 21, 22 than in the third zone 23, basis weight or density of the core 4 may be adjusted to be lower in the first and second zones 21, 22 than in the third zone 23.

[0031]

The article 1A is constructed so that, in the crotch region 7, the first and second zones 21, 22 form the tucks 26, 27 which are convex inwardly of the leg-holes 15 and therefore a transverse dimension of the crotch region 7 can be more easily reduced than in the case of the crotch region 7 not formed with such tucks 26, 27 (See Fig. 2). In the article 1A, the

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contractile force of the first and second elastic members 24, 25 reliably stabilizes the tucks 26, 27 and it is not apprehended that these tucks 26, 27 might be unintentionally unfolded even when the wearer's legs are guided through the leg-holes 15.

[0032]

The crotch region 7 is appropriately received in the wearer's crotch region as the article 1A is put on the wearer's body, so there is no possibility that the crotch region 7 might become excessively bulky and the wearer might experience a feeling of incompatibility. In addition, there is no anxiety that the core 4 in the crotch region 7 might be irregularly folded and/or formed with a plurality of irregular wrinkles even if the crotch region 7 is squeezed in the wearer's crotch region. Thus, bodily discharges absorbing function in the crotch region 7 is reliably maintained without any possibility that the bodily discharges might leak sideways from the crotch region 7.

[0033]

In the article 1A, an angle $\theta 1$ defined between the first folding guide lines 19 as well as an angle $\theta 2$ defined between the second folding guide lines 20 is preferably in a range of 30 to 120° as shown by Fig. 3. If these angles $\theta 1$, $\theta 2$ are less than 30°, the first and second zones 21, 22 will become unacceptably narrow and make it impossible to form the tucks

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sufficiently large to reduce the transverse dimension of the crotch region 7. If these angles θ_1 , θ_2 exceed 120° , both the first folding guide lines 21 and the second folding guide lines 22 can not reach the waist's lateral margins 10 and the contractile force of the first and second elastic members 24, 25 can not pull the first and second zones 21, 22 inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction. Consequently, it will be impossible to form the tucks 26, 27 in the crotch region 7.

[0034]

In the article 1A, the first and second zones 21, 22 respectively form the tucks 26, 27 which are convex inwardly of the leg-holes 15 so that these zones 21, 22 may rise toward the waist-hole 14, as seen in Fig. 4. These first and second zones 21, 22 rising in this manner form barriers against bodily discharges and reliably prevent any quantity of bodily discharges from leaking sideways from the first and second zones 21, 22. In the article 1A, the reduced transverse dimension of the crotch region 7 does not adversely affect the bodily discharge absorbing function in the crotch region 7 since the portions of the core 4 lying in the first and second zones 21, 22 effectively absorb and retain bodily discharges.

[0035]

In the article 1A, the elastic members 18 contract inward

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as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction and cause the lateral margins 2b, 3b of the sheets 2, 3 to rise on the core 4 as the tucks 26, 27 are unfolded against the contractile force of the elastic members 24, 25. Even when the tucks 26, 27 are unfolded, the lateral margins 2b, 3b of these sheets 2, 3 rising on the core 4 form the barriers against bodily discharges and thereby prevent leak of bodily discharges from occurring around the crotch region 7.

[0036]

Fig. 5 is a perspective view showing a wearing article 1B according to an embodiment of the invention, Fig. 6 is a perspective view showing the article 1B of Fig. 5 as tucks 26, 27 unfolded outward against contractile force of elastic members 24, 25, Fig. 3 is a developed plan view showing the article 1B of Fig. 5 with waist's lateral margins 10 disconnected from each other as partially broken away and Fig. 8 is a sectional view taken along a line VIII-VIII in Fig. 5. In Figs. 5 through 7, a transverse direction is indicated by an arrow L, a longitudinal direction is indicated by an arrow M and a leg-surrounding direction is indicated by an arrow N (only in Figs. 5 and 6). Fig. 7 shows the article 1B as stretched in the transverse direction as well as in the longitudinal direction.

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[0037]

The article 1B comprises the liquid-pervious topsheet 2 (liquid-pervious sheet), the liquid-impervious outer sheet 5 (liquid-impervious sheet), the liquid-absorbent core 4 interposed between these sheets 2, 5 and respective elastic members 16, 17, 18, 24, 25. In the article 1B, the topsheet 2 faces the wearer's skin with interposition of the core 4 and the outer sheet 5 faces away from the wearer's skin. The article 1B has a front waist region 6 and a rear waist region 8 opposed to each other and a crotch region 7 extending between these waist regions 6, 8. The core 4 extends over the crotch region 7 and further into the front and rear waist regions 6, 8 so as to occupy transversely middle areas in these front and rear waist regions 6, 8.

[0038]

The article 1B has a waist-surrounding upper margin 9 extending in the transverse direction, transversely opposite waist's lateral margins 10 extending in the longitudinal direction, and first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12 extending in the leg-surrounding direction. The first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12 describe circular arcs which are convex inward as viewed in the transverse direction of the article 1B. In the article 1B, the

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waist's lateral margins 10 are put flat and bonded together by means of plural welding lines 13 arranged intermittently in the longitudinal direction. The article 1B is formed with a waist-hole 14 and a pair of leg-holes 15.

[0039]

A belt-like waist elastic member 16 extending in the transverse direction is contractibly attached to the waist-surrounding upper margin 9. Plural leg elastic members 17, 18 are contractibly attached to the first and second leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12, respectively, so as to extend in the leg-surrounding direction.

[0040]

As shown by Fig.6, the crotch region 7 is formed with a pair of first folding guide lines 19 extending in the transverse direction from two points P1, P2 on the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11 placed aside toward the front and rear waist regions 6, 8, respectively, toward a transverse middle 7a of the crotch region 7 and a pair of second folding guide lines 20 extending in the transverse direction from two points P3, P4 on the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12 placed aside toward the front and rear waist regions 6, 8, respectively, toward the transverse middle 7a of the crotch region 7.

[0041]

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The crotch region 7 is divided into a first zone 21 enclosed by the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11 and the first folding guide lines 19, a second zone 22 enclosed by the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12 and the second folding guide lines 20 and a third zone 23 except the first and second zones 21, 22. The first zone 21 presents a substantially triangular shape tapering from the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11 toward the middle 7a of the crotch region 7. Similarly, the second zone 22 presents a substantially triangular shape tapering from the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12 toward the middle 7a of the crotch region 7. The core 4 is absent in the first and second zones 21, 22.

[0042]

Immediately inside the side edge 4b of the core 4 on the side of the first leg-surrounding lateral margin 11, a first elastic member 24 stretched at a predetermined ratio is contractibly attached to the article. The first elastic member 24 is laid inside the leg elastic members 18 as viewed in the transverse direction and extends in the leg-surrounding direction across the first zone 21 to the third zone 23. In the similar manner, immediately inside the side edge 4b of the core 4 on the side of the second leg-surrounding lateral margin 12, a second elastic member 25 stretched at a predetermined

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ratio is contractibly attached to the article. The second elastic member 25 is laid inside the leg elastic members 18 as viewed in the transverse direction and extends in the leg-surrounding direction across the second zone 22 to the third zone 23. The first and second elastic members 24, 25 are interposed between the topsheet 2 and the outer sheet 5 and bonded to the inner surfaces of these sheets 2, 5.

[0043]

In the crotch region 7, the first zone 21 is pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under the contractile force of the first elastic member 24 and the second zone 22 is pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under the contractile force of the second elastic member 25 so that the crotch region 7 is folded along the first and second folding guide lines 19, 20. In the crotch region 7, consequently, the first zone 21 forms a tuck 26 which is convex inwardly of the leg-hole 15 and the second zone 22 forms a tuck 27 which is convex inwardly of the leg-hole 15. The first zone 21 and the second zone 22 are tucked between front and rear halves of the third zone 23. In the first zone 21, a front half 21a and a rear half 21b thereof contact each other while portions of the outer sheet 5 extending in these front and rear halves 21a, 21b of the first zone 21 have respective outer surfaces

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contacting each other. In the second zone 22 a front half 22a and a rear half 22b thereof contact each other while portions of the outer sheet 5 extending in these front and rear halves 22a, 22b of the second zone 22 have respective outer surfaces contacting each other. In the first and second zones 21, 22, imaginary third folding guide lines 28 extending in the transverse direction are defined between the front and rear halves 21a, 21b and between the front and rear halves 22a, 22b, respectively. An alternative case may be also assumed in which the zones 21, 22 are pulled inward as viewed in the leg-surrounding direction under the contractile force of the first and second elastic members 24, 25 and thereby these zones 21, 22 are tucked inwardly of the respective leg-holes 15 without forming the third folding guide lines 28 in these first and second zones 21, 22.

[0044]

On the basis of 100 representing the length of these elastic members 24, 25 having been stretched at a predetermined ratio, the first and second elastic members 24, 25 exhibit the same contraction percentage and stretch stress as in the embodiment shown by Fig. 1.

[0045]

The topsheet 2 presents a substantially rectangular

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planar shape extend over the crotch region 7 and further into the front and rear waist regions 6, 8. The topsheet 2 has longitudinally opposite end margins 2a, extending outward beyond the longitudinally opposite ends 4a of the core 4 and transversely opposite lateral margins 2b extending outward beyond the transversely opposite side edges 4b of the core 4. Inner surfaces of the top- and outer sheets 2, 5 are put flat and bonded together along these end margins 2a and lateral margins 2b. The core 4 is similar to the core in the embodiment shown by Fig. 1 and bonded to the respective inner surfaces of the topsheet 2 and the outer sheet 5.

[0046]

The outer sheet 5 comprises two hydrophobic fibrous nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30 laminated one upon another and breathable liquid-impervious plastic film 31 interposed between these nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30. The outer sheet 5 has a surface area larger than the surface area of the topsheet 2 and presents a substantially hourglass-like planar shape. The film 31 also presents a substantially rectangular planar shape and substantially same as the topsheet 2 in shape as well as size and underlies the core 4. Of the outer sheet 5, the nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30 are partially put flat and bonded together and the film 31 is bonded to these nonwoven fabric

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layers 29, 30. The waist-surrounding upper end margin 9 and the waist's lateral margins 10 are formed by the outer sheet 5 and the leg-surrounding lateral margins 11, 12 are formed by the lateral margins 2b of the topsheet 2 and the outer sheet 5.

[0047]

The waist elastic member 16 is interposed between the nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30 constituting the outer sheet 5 and bonded to these nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30. The leg elastic members 17, 18 comprise the elastic member 17 attached to the outer sheet 5 and the elastic member 18 attached to the topsheet 2. The elastic members 17 are interposed between the nonwoven fabric layers 29, 30 and bonded to these nonwoven fabric layers 23, 30. The elastic members 18 are attached to the lateral margins 2b of the topsheet 2 so that these elastic members 18 may be wrapped with a part of the topsheet 2.

[0048]

The article 1B is constructed so that, in the crotch region 7, the first and second zones 21, 22 form the tucks 26, 27 which are convex inwardly of the leg-holes 15 and therefore a transverse dimension of the crotch region 7 is correspondingly reduced. In the article 1B, the contractile force of the first and second elastic members 24, 25 reliably stabilizes the tucks

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26, 27 and it is not apprehended that these tucks 26, 27 might be unintentionally unfolded even when the wearer's legs are guided through the leg-holes 15.

[0049]

The crotch region 7 is appropriately received in the wearer's crotch region as the article 1B is put on the wearer's body, so there is no possibility that the crotch region 7 might become excessively bulky and the wearer might experience a feeling of incompatibility. In addition, there is no anxiety that the core 4 in the crotch region 7 might be irregularly folded and/or formed with a plurality of irregular wrinkles even if the crotch region 7 is squeezed in the wearer's crotch region. Thus, bodily discharges absorbing function in the crotch region 7 is reliably maintained without any possibility that the bodily discharges might leak sideways from the crotch region 7. In the article 1B, an angle $\theta 1$ defined between the first folding guide lines 19 as well as an angle $\theta 2$ defined between the second folding guide lines 20 is preferably in a range of 30 to 120° as shown by Fig. 6.

[0050]

In the article 1B, the first and second zones 21, 22 form the tucks 26, 27 which are convex inwardly of the leg-holes 15 and rise toward the waist-hole 14, as will be apparent from Fig.

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8. These zones 21, 22 rising in this manner form the barriers against bodily discharges and thereby prevent leak of bodily discharges from occurring around the crotch region 7.

[0051]

Stock material for the topsheet 2 may be selected from a group consisting of hydrophilic fibrous nonwoven fabric, hydrophobic fibrous nonwoven fabric having a plurality of apertures and plastic film having a plurality of fine apertures. Stock material for the intermediate sheet 3 may be selected from a group consisting of hydrophilic fibrous nonwoven fabric, hydrophobic fibrous nonwoven fabric and breathable liquid-impervious plastic film. It is also possible to use, as stock material for the intermediate sheet 3 and the outer sheet 5, a composite nonwoven fabric comprising melt blown fibrous nonwoven fabric having a high water-resistance and spun bond fibrous nonwoven fabric having a high strength as well as a high flexibility laminated on at least one side of the melt blown fibrous nonwoven fabric.

[0052]

Nonwoven fabric used for the present invention may be selected from a group consisting of spun lace-, needle punch-, melt blown-, thermal bond-, spun bond-, and chemical bond-processes. Component fiber of the nonwoven fabric may be

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selected from a group consisting of polyolefin-, polyester- and polyamide-fibers, and core-and-sheath type or side-by-side type conjugate fiber of polyethylene/polypropylene or polyethylene/polyester.

[0053]

Stock material for the outer sheet 5 may be selected from a group consisting of elastically stretchable hydrophobic fibrous nonwoven fabric, elastically stretchable breathable liquid-impervious plastic film and a composite sheet comprising elastically stretchable hydrophobic fibrous nonwoven fabric laminated with elastically stretchable breathable liquid-impervious plastic film. It is possible to use, as the outer sheet, composite nonwoven fabric comprising elastically stretchable hydrophobic fibrous nonwoven fabric made of thermoplastic elastomeric resin fiber, and hydrophobic fibrous nonwoven fabric made of crimped fiber obtained by melt spinning thermoplastic synthetic resin of polypropylene, polyethylene or polyester, laminated at least one side of the former fibrous nonwoven fabric.

[0054]

Bonding of the sheets 2, 3, 5 one to another, bonding of the core 4 to the sheets 2, 3, 5 and bonding of the elastic members 16, 17, 18, 24, 25 to the sheets 2, 3, 5 may be achieved using

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hot melt adhesive or welding technique such as heat-sealing or sonic-sealing.

[0055]

[Effect of the Invention]

The pants-type disposable wearing article according to the present invention is primarily characterized in that, in the crotch region, the first and second zones form the tucks which are convex inwardly of the leg-holes and therefore a transverse dimension of the crotch region can be reduced than in the case of the crotch region not formed with such tucks. In the article, the contractile force of the first and second elastic members reliably stabilizes the tucks and it is not apprehended that these tucks might be unintentionally unfolded even when the wearer's legs are guided through the leg-holes.

[0056]

The crotch region is appropriately received in the wearer's crotch region as the article is put on the wearer's body, so there is no possibility that the crotch region might become excessively bulky and the wearer might experience a feeling of incompatibility. In addition, there is no anxiety that the core in the crotch region might be irregularly folded and/or formed with a plurality of irregular wrinkles even if the crotch region is squeezed in the wearer's crotch region.

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Therefore, bodily discharges absorbing function in the crotch region is reliably maintained without any possibility that the bodily discharges might leak sideways from the crotch region.

[0057]

In the embodiment of the article wherein the core has stiffness lower in the first and second zones than in the third zone, a contractile force of the first and second elastic members is sufficiently high to pull the first and second zones inwardly of the leg-holes and thereby to facilitate the tucks to be formed in the crotch region.

[0058]

In the embodiment of the article wherein the core is absent in the first and second zones, a contractile force of the first and second elastic members can smoothly pull the first and second zones inwardly of the leg-holes without being affected by stiffness of the core and thereby to facilitate the tucks to be formed in the crotch region.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Fig. 1]

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing an example of the wearing article according to the invention.

[Fig. 2]

Fig. 2 is a perspective view showing the article of Fig.

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1 as tucked regions unfolded outward against contractile force of elastic members.

[Fig. 3]

Fig. 3 is a developed plan view showing the article of Fig. 1 with front and rear waist regions disconnected from each other as partially broken away.

[FIG. 4]

Fig. 4 is a sectional view taken along a line IV-IV in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 5]

Fig. 5 is a perspective view showing another example of the wearing article according to the invention.

[Fig. 6]

Fig. 6 is a perspective view showing the article of Fig. 5 as tucked regions unfolded outward against contractile force of elastic members.

[Fig. 7]

Fig. 7 is a developed plan view showing the article of Fig. 5 with front and rear waist regions disconnected from each other as partially broken away.

[Fig. 8]

Fig. 8 is a sectional view taken along a line VIII-VIII in Fig. 5.

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[Identification of Reference Numerals Used in the Drawings]

- 1A pants-type disposable wearing article
- 1B pants-type disposable wearing article
- 2 liquid-pervious topsheet (liquid-pervious sheet)
- 3 intermediate sheet
- 4 liquid-absorbent core
- 5 liquid-impervious outer sheet (liquid-impervious sheet)
- 6 front waist region
- 7 crotch region
- 8 rear waist region
- 9 waist-surrounding upper margin
- 10 waist's lateral margins
- 11 first leg's lateral margin
- 12 second leg's lateral margin
- 14 waist-hole
- 15 leg-holes
- 19 first folding guide line
- 20 second folding guide line
- 21 first zone
- 21a front half
- 21b rear half
- 22 second zone
- 22a front half

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[Name of Document]

ABSTRACT

[Contents of the Abstract]

[Object] The present invention aims to provide a pants-type disposable wearing article allowing a crotch region to be formed with tucks stabilized against being unintentionally unfolded, which serve, in turn, to reduce a transverse dimension of the crotch region so that the crotch region may be compactly received in a crotch region of the article wearer.

[Measure to Achieve the Object] In a crotch region 7 of an article 1A is formed with a pair of first folding guide lines 19 extending from a first waist's lateral margin 11 toward a transverse middle 7a of the crotch region 7 and a pair of second folding guide lines 20 extending from a second waist's lateral margin 12 toward the transverse middle 7a of the crotch region 7. The crotch region 7 is divided into a first zone 21 enclosed by the first waist's lateral margin 11 and the first folding guide lines 19, a second zone 22 enclosed by the second waist's lateral margin 12 and the second folding guide lines 20 and a third zone 23 except these first and second zones 21, 22. Immediately inside the side edges 4b of the core 4, first and second elastic members 24, 25 stretched at a predetermined ratio are contractibly attached to the article. These first and second elastic members 24, 25 extend in the leg-surrounding

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direction across these zones 21, 22 to the third zone 23. In the article 1A, these zones 21, 22 are pulled inward as viewed in a leg-surrounding direction under a contractile force of the elastic members 24, 25 to form tucks 26, 27 which are convex inwardly of the leg-holes 15.

[Reference Drawing]

Fig. 1